ANSWERS TO KIRK-SHAHZAD'S QUESTIONS ON STRONG b-METRIC SPACES

TRAN VAN AN AND NGUYEN VAN DUNG

ABSTRACT. In this paper, two open questions on strong b-metric spaces posed by Kirk and Shahzad [13, Chapter 12] are investigated. A counter-example is constructed to give a negative answer to the first question, and a theorem on the completion of a strong b-metric space is proved to give a positive answer to the second question.

1. Introduction and preliminaries

In 1993, Czerwik [4] introduced the notion of a b-metric which is a generalization of a metric with a view of generalizing the Banach contraction map theorem.

Definition 1.1 ([4]). Let X be a non-empty set and $d: X \times X \longrightarrow [0, +\infty)$ be a function such that for all $x, y, z \in X$,

- (1) d(x,y) = 0 if and only if x = y.
- (2) d(x,y) = d(y,x).
- (3) $d(x,z) \le 2[d(x,y) + d(y,z)].$

Then d is called a b-metric on X and (X, d) is called a b-metric space.

After that, in 1998, Czerwik [5] generalized this notion where the constant 2 was replaced by a constant $s \ge 1$, also with the name *b-metric*. In 2010, Khamsi and Hussain [12] reintroduced the notion of a *b*-metric under the name *metric-type*.

Definition 1.2 ([12], Definition 6). Let X be a non-empty set, K > 0 and $D: X \times X \longrightarrow [0, +\infty)$ be a function such that for all $x, y, z \in X$,

- (1) D(x,y) = 0 if and only if x = y.
- (2) D(x,y) = D(y,x).
- (3) $D(x,z) \le K[D(x,y) + D(y,z)].$

Then D is called a metric-type on X and (X, D, K) is called a metric-type space.

Definition 1.3 ([12], Definition 7). Let (X, D, K) be a b-metric space.

- (1) A sequence $\{x_n\}$ is called *convergent* to x, written as $\lim_{n\to\infty} x_n = x$, if $\lim_{n\to\infty} D(x_n, x) = 0$.
- (2) A sequence $\{x_n\}$ is called Cauchy if $\lim_{n,m\to\infty} D(x_n,x_m) = 0$.
- (3) (X, D, K) is called *complete* if every Cauchy sequence is a convergent sequence.

From Definition 1.2.(3), it is easy to see that $K \ge 1$. Also in 2010, Khamsi [11] introduced another definition of a metric-type where the condition (3) in Definition 1.2 was replaced by

$$D(x,z) \le K[D(x,y_1) + \ldots + D(y_n,z)]$$

for all $x, y_1, \ldots, y_n, z \in X$, see [11, Definition 2.7]. In the sequel, the metric-type in the sense of Khamsi and Hussain [12] will be called a *b*-metric to avoid the confusion about the metric-type in the sense of Khamsi [11]. Note that every metric-type is a *b*-metric.

The same relaxation of the triangle inequality in Definition 1.2 was also discussed in 2003 by Fagin *et al.* [8], who called this new distance measure nonlinear elastic matching. The authors of that paper remarked that this measure had been used, for example, in [9] for trademark shapes and in [3] to measure ice floes. In 2009, Xia [15] used this semimetric distance to study the optimal transport path between probability measures.

In recent times, b-metric spaces were studied by many authors, especially fixed point theory on b-metric spaces [1], [7], [10], [13, Chapter 12], [14]. Some authors were also studied topological properties of b-metric spaces. In [2], An et al. showed that every b-metric space with the topology induced by its convergence is a semi-metrizable space and thus many properties of b-metric spaces used in the literature are obvious. Then, the authors proved the Stone-type theorem on b-metric spaces and get a sufficient condition for a b-metric space to be metrizable. Notice that a b-metric space is always understood to be a topological space with respect to the topology induced by its convergence and a b-metric need not be continuous [2, Examples 3.9 & 3.10]. This fact suggests a strengthening of the notion of b-metric spaces which remedies this defect.

Definition 1.4 ([13], Definition 12.7). Let X be a non-empty set, $K \ge 1$ and $D: X \times X \longrightarrow [0, +\infty)$ be a function such that for all $x, y, z \in X$,

- (1) D(x,y) = 0 if and only if x = y.
- (2) D(x,y) = D(y,x).
- (3) $D(x,z) \le D(x,y) + KD(y,z)$.

Then D is called a strong b-metric on X and (X, D, K) is called a strong b-metric space.

Remark 1.5 ([13], page 122). (1) Every strong b-metric is continuous.

- (2) Every open ball $B(a,r) = \{x \in X : D(a,x) < r\}$ of a strong b-metric space (X,D,K) is open.
- In [13, Chapter 12], Kirk and Shahzad surveyed b-metric spaces, strong b-metric spaces, and related problems. An interesting work was attracted many authors is to transform results of metric spaces to the setting of b-metric spaces. It is only fair to point out that some results seem to require the full use of the triangle inequality of a metric space. In this connection, Kirk and Shahzad [13, page 127] mentioned an interesting extension of Nadler's theorem due to Dontchev and Hager [6]. Recall that for a metric space (X, d) and $A, B \subset X$, $x \in X$,

$$\operatorname{dist}(x,A) = \inf\{d(x,a) : a \in A\}$$
$$\delta(A,B) = \sup\{\operatorname{dist}(x,A) : x \in B\}$$

and these notation are understood similarly on b-metric spaces.

Theorem 1.6 ([13], Theorem 12.7). Let (X,d) be a complete metric space, $T: X \longrightarrow X$ be a map from X into a non-empty closed subset of X, and $x_0 \in X$ such that

- (1) $dist(x_0, Tx_0) < r(1-k)$ for some r > 0 and some $k \in [0, 1)$.
- (2) $\delta(Tx \cap B(x_0, r), Ty) \leq kd(x, y)$ for all $x, y \in B(x_0, r)$.

Then T has a fixed point in $B(x_0, r)$.

Based on the definition of $\delta(A, B)$ and the proof of Theorem [13, Theorem 12.7], the assumption (2) in the above theorem is implicitly understood as

$$\delta(Tx \cap B(x_0, r), Ty) \leq kd(x, y)$$
 for all $x, y \in B(x_0, r)$ and $Tx \cap B(x_0, r) \neq \emptyset$.

The authors of [13] did not know whether Theorem 1.6 holds under the weaker strong b-metric assumption. Explicitly, we have the following question.

Question 1.7 ([13], page 128). Let (X, D, K) be a complete strong b-metric space, $T: X \longrightarrow X$ be a map from X into a non-empty closed subset of X, and $x_0 \in X$ such that

- (1) $dist(x_0, Tx_0) < r(1-k)$ for some r > 0 and some $k \in [0, 1)$.
- (2) $\delta(Tx \cap B(x_0, r), Ty) \le kD(x, y)$ for all $x, y \in B(x_0, r)$ and $Tx \cap B(x_0, r) \ne \emptyset$.

Does the map T have a fixed point in $B(x_0, r)$?

Recall that a map $f: X \longrightarrow Y$ from a b-metric space (X, D, K) into a b-metric space (Y, D', K') is called an *isometry* if D'(f(x), f(y)) = D(x, y) for all $x, y \in X$. Also, a b-metric space (X^*, D^*, K^*) is called a *completion* of the b-metric space (X, D, K) if (X^*, D^*, K^*) is compete and there exists an isometry $f: X \longrightarrow X^*$ such that $\overline{f(X)} = X^*$. A classical result is that every metric space is dense in a complete metric space. So, it is interesting to ask whether this result holds or not in the setting of strong b-metric spaces.

Question 1.8 ([13], page 128). Is every strong b-metric space dense in a complete strong b-metric space?

Kirk and Shahzad [13, page 128] commented that if the answer of Question 1.8 is positive, then every contraction map $f: X \longrightarrow X$ on a strong b-metric space X may be extended to a contraction map $f: X^* \longrightarrow X^*$ on a complete strong b-metric space X^* which has a unique fixed point. Ostrowski's theorem [13, Theorem 12.6] then would provide a method for approximating this fixed point.

In this paper, two above questions on strong b-metric spaces are investigated. A counter-example is constructed to give a negative answer to Question 1.7, and a theorem on the completion of a strong b-metric space is proved to give a positive answer to Question 1.8.

2. Main results

First, the following example gives a negative answer to Question 1.7.

Example 2.1. Let $X = \{1, 2, 3\}$, $D: X \times X \longrightarrow [0, +\infty)$ be defined by D(1, 1) = D(2, 2) = D(3, 3) = 0, D(1, 2) = D(2, 1) = 2, D(2, 3) = D(3, 2) = 1, D(1, 3) = D(3, 1) = 6 and a map $T: X \longrightarrow X$ be defined by

$$T1 = 2, T2 = 3, T3 = 1.$$

Then

- (1) (X, D, K) is a complete strong b-metric space with K = 4.
- (2) T and (X, D, K) satisfy all assumptions of Question 1.7 with $x_0 = 1$, r = 6, $k = \frac{1}{2}$.
- (3) T has no any fixed point.

Proof. (1). For all $x, y \in X$, it follows from definition of D that D(x, y) = D(y, x) and

D(x,y) = 0 if and only if x = y.

We also have
$$D(1,3) + KD(3,2) = 6 + 4.1 = 10 \ge 2 = D(1,2)$$

$$KD(1,3) + D(3,2) = 4.6 + 1 = 25 \ge 2 = D(1,2)$$

 $D(1,2) + KD(2,3) = 2 + 4.1 = 6 = 6 = D(1,3)$
 $KD(1,2) + D(2,3) = 4.2 + 1 = 9 \ge 6 = D(1,3)$
 $D(2,1) + KD(1,3) = 2 + 4.6 = 26 \ge 1 = D(2,3)$
 $KD(2,1) + D(1,3) = 4.2 + 6 = 14 \ge 1 = D(2,3)$.

By the above, D is a strong b-metric on X. Since X is finite and discrete, X is complete. So, (X, D, K) is a complete strong b-metric space with K = 4.

(2). Since TX = X, TX is a non-empty closed subset of X. We have

$$dist(x_0, Tx_0) = dist(1, T1) = dist(1, \{2\}) = D(1, 2) = 2$$

and

$$r(1-k) = 6(1-\frac{1}{2}) = 3.$$

This proves that $dist(x_0, Tx_0) < r(1-k)$.

We also have $B(x_0, r) = B(1, 6) = \{1, 2\}.$

If
$$x = y = 1$$
, then $Tx \cap B(x_0, r) = \{2\}$ and
$$\delta(Tx \cap B(x_0, r), Ty) = \delta(\{2\}, \{2\}) = D(2, 2) = 0 < kD(x, y).$$

If
$$x = y = 2$$
, then $Tx \cap B(x_0, r) = \emptyset$.

If x = 1, y = 2, then

$$\delta(Tx \cap B(x_0, r), Ty) = \delta(\{2\}, \{3\}) = D(2, 3) = 1 = \frac{1}{2}D(1, 2) = kD(x, y).$$

If x = 2, y = 1, then $Tx \cap B(x_0, r) = \emptyset$.

By the above, $\delta(Tx \cap B(x_0, r), Ty) \leq kD(x, y)$ for all $x, y \in B(x_0, r)$ and $Tx \cap B(x_0, r) \neq \emptyset$.

(3). By definition of T, we see that T has no any fixed point.

Next, the following theorem is a positive answer to Question 1.8.

Theorem 2.2. Let (X, D, K) be a strong b-metric space. Then

- (1) (X, D, K) has a completion (X^*, D^*, K) .
- (2) The completion of (X, D, K) is unique in the sense that if (X_1^*, D_1^*, K_1) and (X_2^*, D_2^*, K_2) are two completions of (X, D, K), then there is a bijective isometry $\varphi : X_1^* \longrightarrow X_2^*$ which restricts to the identity on X.

Proof. Put

$$C = \{\{x_n\} : \{x_n\} \text{ is a Cauchy sequence in } (X, D, K)\}.$$

Define a relation \sim on $\mathcal C$ as follows:

$$\{x_n\} \sim \{y_n\}$$
 if and only if $\lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n, y_n) = 0$, for all $\{x_n\}$, $\{y_n\} \in \mathcal{C}$.

The relation \sim obviously satisfies reflexivity and symmetry. If $\{x_n\} \sim \{y_n\}$ and $\{y_n\} \sim \{z_n\}$, then $\lim_{n\to\infty} D(x_n,y_n) = \lim_{n\to\infty} D(y_n,z_n) = 0$. Since

$$0 \le D(x_n, z_n) \le D(x_n, y_n) + KD(y_n, z_n)$$

for all n, $\lim_{n\to\infty} D(x_n, z_n) = 0$. Thus $\{x_n\} \sim \{z_n\}$. Therefore, the relation \sim is an equivalent relation on \mathcal{C} .

Denote

$$X^* = \{x^* = [\{x_n\}] : \{x_n\} \in \mathcal{C}\}$$

where $x^* = [\{x_n\}]$ is an equivalence class of $\{x_n\}$ under the relation \sim , and define a function $D^*: X^* \times X^* \longrightarrow \mathbb{R}$ by

$$D^*(x^*, y^*) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n, y_n). \tag{2.1}$$

We see that, for all n, m

$$D(x_n, y_n) \le KD(x_n, x_m) + D(x_m, y_n)$$

 $\le KD(x_n, x_m) + D(x_m, y_m) + KD(y_m, y_n).$

It implies that

$$D(x_n, y_n) - D(x_m, y_m) \le K [D(x_n, x_m) + D(y_m, y_n)].$$
(2.2)

Also

$$D(x_m, y_m) \le KD(x_m, x_n) + D(x_n, y_n)$$

 $\le KD(x_n, x_m) + D(x_n, y_n) + KD(y_n, y_m).$

Therefore,

$$D(x_m, y_m) - D(x_n, y_n) \le K [D(x_n, x_m) + D(y_m, y_n)].$$
(2.3)

It follows from (2.2) and (2.3) that

$$|D(x_m, y_m) - D(x_n, y_n)| \le K[D(x_n, x_m) + D(y_m, y_n)].$$
 (2.4)

Taking the limit as $n, m \to \infty$ in (2.4), we get $\lim_{n,m\to\infty} |D(x_m,y_m) - D(x_n,y_n)| = 0$, that is, $\{D(x_n,y_n)\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in \mathbb{R} . Thus $\lim_{n\to\infty} D(x_n,y_n)$ exists.

Moreover, if $\{x_n\} \sim \{z_n\}$ and $\{y_n\} \sim \{w_n\}$, then

$$\lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n, z_n) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(y_n, w_n) = 0.$$
(2.5)

We see that

$$D(x_n, y_n) \le KD(x_n, z_n) + D(z_n, y_n)$$

 $\le KD(x_n, z_n) + D(z_n, w_n) + KD(w_n, y_n).$

It implies that

$$D(x_n, y_n) - D(z_n, w_n) \le KD(x_n, z_n) + KD(w_n, y_n).$$

Similarly,

$$D(z_n, w_n) - D(x_n, y_n) \le KD(z_n, x_n) + KD(y_n, w_n).$$

Therefore,

$$|D(x_n, y_n) - D(z_n, w_n)| \le KD(x_n, z_n) + KD(w_n, y_n).$$
(2.6)

Taking the limit as $n, m \to \infty$ in (2.6) and using (2.5), we get $\lim_{n \to \infty} |D(x_n, y_n) - D(z_n, w_n)| = 0$. Thus $\lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n, y_n) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(z_n, w_n)$. Therefore, the function D^* is well-defined.

In the next, we shall prove that (X^*, D^*, K) is a strong b-metric space. For all $x^*, y^*, z^* \in X^*$, we have

$$D^*(x^*, y^*) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n, y_n) \ge 0$$
 since $D(x_n, y_n) \ge 0$ for all n .

 $D^*(x^*, y^*) = 0$ if and only if $\lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n, y_n) = 0$, that is, $\{x_n\} \sim \{y_n\}$. It is equivalent to $x^* = y^*$.

 $D^*(x^*, y^*) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n, y_n) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(y_n, x_n) = D^*(y^*, x^*)$ since $D(x_n, y_n) = D(y_n, x_n)$ for all n.

$$D^*(x^*, z^*) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n, z_n) \le \lim_{n \to \infty} \left[D(x_n, y_n) + KD(y_n, z_n) \right] = D^*(x^*, y^*) + KD^*(y^*, z^*).$$

So, (X^*, D^*, K) is a strong b-metric space.

For each $x \in X$, put $f(x) = [\{x, x, x, \ldots\}] \in X^*$. We see that f is an isometry from (X, D, K) into (X^*, D^*, K) since

$$D^*(f(x), f(y)) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(x, y) = D(x, y)$$

for all $x, y \in X$.

Next, we will prove that f(X) is dense in X^* . If $x^* = [\{x_n\}] \in X^*$, then $\lim_{n,m\to\infty} D(x_n,x_m) = 0$.

For each $i \in \mathbb{N}$, there exists n_0^i such that $D(x_n, x_m) \leq \frac{1}{i}$ for all $n, m \geq n_0^i$. It implies that

$$0 \le D^* (f(x_{n_0^i}), x^*) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_{n_0^i}, x_n) \le \frac{1}{i}.$$

So $\lim_{i\to\infty} D^*(f(x_{n_0^i}), x^*) = 0$. This proves that $\lim_{i\to\infty} f(x_{n_0^i}) = x^*$, that is, f(X) is dense in X^* .

Next, we will prove that (X^*, D^*, K) is complete. Let $\{x_n^*\}$ be a Cauchy sequence in X^* , where $x_n^* = [\{x_i^n\}_i]$ for some $\{x_i^n\}_i \in \mathcal{C}$. Then

$$\lim_{n,m\to\infty} D^*(x_n^*, x_m^*) = 0. (2.7)$$

Note that the open ball $B(x_n^*, \frac{1}{Kn})$ is open by Remark 1.5.(2). From the fact that f(X) is dense in X^* , for each n there exists $y_n \in X$ such that

$$D^*(f(y_n), x_n^*) < \frac{1}{Kn}.$$
(2.8)

By (2.8), for all n, m, we have

$$D(y_{n}, y_{m}) = D^{*}(f(y_{n}), f(y_{m}))$$

$$\leq KD^{*}(f(y_{n}), x_{n}^{*}) + D^{*}(x_{n}^{*}, f(y_{m}))$$

$$\leq KD^{*}(f(y_{n}), x_{n}^{*}) + D^{*}(x_{n}^{*}, x_{m}^{*}) + KD^{*}(x_{m}^{*}, f(y_{m}))$$

$$< \frac{1}{n} + D^{*}(x_{n}^{*}, x_{m}^{*}) + \frac{1}{m}.$$
(2.9)

Taking the limit as $n, m \to \infty$ in (2.9) and using (2.7), we get

$$\lim_{n,m\to\infty} D(y_n, y_m) = 0. (2.10)$$

Thus $\{y_n\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in (X, D, K). Put $y^* = [\{y_n\}] \in X^*$. From (2.8), we have

$$D^{*}(x_{n}^{*}, y^{*}) \leq KD^{*}(x_{n}^{*}, f(y_{n})) + D^{*}(f(y_{n}), y^{*})$$

$$< K\frac{1}{Kn} + \lim_{m \to \infty} D(y_{n}, y_{m})$$

$$= \frac{1}{n} + \lim_{m \to \infty} D(y_{n}, y_{m}). \tag{2.11}$$

Taking the limit as $n \to \infty$ in (2.11) and using (2.10), we have $\lim_{n \to \infty} D^*(x_n^*, y^*) = 0$, that is, $\lim_{n \to \infty} x_n^* = y^*$ in (X^*, D^*, K) . Therefore, (X^*, D^*, K) is complete.

Finally, we prove the uniqueness of the completion. Let (X_1^*, D_1^*, K_1) and (X_2^*, D_2^*, K_2) be two completions of (X, D, K). For each $x_1^* \in X_1^*$, there exists $\{x_n\} \subset X$ such that $\lim_{n \to \infty} f_1(x_n) = x_1^*$ where $f_1: X \longrightarrow X_1^*$ is an isometry. Since $\{f_1(x_n)\}$ is convergent, $\{f_1(x_n)\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in X_1^* . Since f_1 is an isometry, $\{x_n\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in X. Note that there exists $f_2: X \longrightarrow X_2^*$ which is also an isometry. Then $\{f_2(x_n)\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in X_2^* and thus there exists $x_2^* \in X_2^*$ such that $\lim_{n \to \infty} f_2(x_n) = x_2^*$. Define $\varphi: X_1^* \longrightarrow X_2^*$ by $\varphi(x_1^*) = x_2^*$.

If $y_2^* \in X_2^*$, then $y_2^* = \lim_{n \to \infty} f_2(y_n)$ for some $\{y_n\} \subset X$. Since $\{f_2(y_n)\}$ is convergent, $\{f_2(y_n)\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in X_2^* . Since f_2 is an isometry, $\{y_n\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in X. Also, f_1 is an isometry, $\{f_1(y_n)\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in X_1^* . Then there exists $y_1^* = \lim_{n \to \infty} f_1(y_n)$. Therefore, $y_2^* = \varphi(y_1^*)$. This proves that φ is bijective. Moreover, for every $x^*, y^* \in X_1^*$ with $x^* = \lim_{n \to \infty} f_1(x_n)$ and $y^* = \lim_{n \to \infty} f_1(y_n)$, by using the continuity of D_1^* and D_2^* , we have

$$\begin{split} D_1^*(x^*,y^*) &= \lim_{n \to \infty} D_1^*(f_1(x_n),f_1(y_n)) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n,y_n) \\ &= \lim_{n \to \infty} D_2^*(f_2(x_n),f_2(y_n)) = D_2^*(\varphi(x^*),\varphi(y^*)). \end{split}$$
 It implies that φ is a bijective isometry $\varphi: X_1^* \longrightarrow X_2^*$ which restricts to the identity on X .

Finally, the following example shows that techniques used in the proof of Theorem 2.2 may not be applied to b-metric spaces.

Example 2.3. Let
$$X = \left\{0, 1, \frac{1}{2}, \dots, \frac{1}{n}, \dots\right\}$$
 and
$$D(x, y) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } x = y \\ 1 & \text{if } x \neq y \in \{0, 1\} \\ |x - y| & \text{if } x \neq y \in \{0\} \cup \left\{\frac{1}{2n} : n = 1, 2, \dots\right\} \end{cases}$$
 otherwise.

Then D is a b-metric on X with $K = \frac{8}{3}$ [2, Example 3.9]. Put $x_n = 1$, $y_n = \frac{1}{2n}$, $z_n = 1$ and $w_n = 0$ for all n. Then $\{x_n\}$, $\{y_n\}$, $\{z_n\}$, $\{w_n\}$ are Cauchy sequences and $\{x_n\} \sim \{z_n\}$ and $\{y_n\} \sim \{w_n\}$. However,

$$\lim_{n \to \infty} D(x_n, y_n) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D\left(1, \frac{1}{2n}\right) = 4 \neq 1 = D(1, 0) = \lim_{n \to \infty} D(z_n, w_n).$$

This shows that the formula (2.1) is not well-defined for the above b-metric D.

Though the above example shows that that techniques used in the proof of Theorem 2.2 may not be applied to b-metric spaces, we do not know whether Theorem 2.2 fully extends to b-metric spaces. So, we conclude with the following question.

Question 2.4. Does every b-metric space have a completion?

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DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS, VINH UNIVERSITY, VINH CITY, NGHE AN, VIET NAM

E-mail address: andhv@yahoo.com

FACULTY OF MATHEMATICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TEACHER EDUCATION, DONG THAP UNIVERSITY, CAO LANH CITY, DONG THAP PROVINCE, VIET NAM

E-mail address: nvdung@dthu.edu.vn